REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 65-84 remain in the application. No claim has yet been allowed.

Some, but not all, of the claims were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) in view of a prior public use or sale of the invention. The Examiner made reference to the paper entitled "Guided Discovery: Decision Making in an Era of Rapid Change" ("Guide Discovery") which the Applicant had submitted together with their Information Disclosure Citation filed August 2, 2002.

Although the Guided Discovery paper describes a survey process, that survey process was carried out using paper forms. The group decision had to be determined by manual tally of responses. Thus, almost every one of the elements of Applicants' claim 1 are not found in the prior art Guided Discovery paper.

In particular, the claim is directed to <u>a process implemented in a network of client browser and application server computers</u>. No such process is described or suggested in the Guided Discovery paper.

Furthermore, the claims goes on to require that the process provide <u>interactive</u> group decision making. It was not possible with a paper based, and manually collated system, to provide for <u>interactive collaborative group decision making process</u>, using a network of client browser and application server computers.

Applicants' claims, furthermore, also require <u>an automatic logic process</u> for facilitating group decisions according to decision logic functions, given the survey response data as inputs. No such automatic logic process was known in the prior art.

Indeed, Applicants have expended much effort in developing the automatic logic process in development of their system. It was, for example, necessary for Applicants to develop not only the high level concept shown in Fig. 1 of their application, but also procedures for extracting a "scoring matrix" as described in connection with Figs. 3 and 4 of their application. These were a necessary part of an "automatic logic model process", which can compile the group decision data, and then provide the collaborative group decision visualization on a real time basis.

Furthermore, the final steps of the claims require automatically and continuously analyzing the survey response data to provide a compiled collaborative group decisions. Such steps as automatically tracking changes to provide guidance in managing the process are also not described or suggested by the Guided Discovery paper.

The rejection on this basis should therefore be withdrawn.

Several of the claims, namely claims 1-6 and 65-71, were also rejected under 35 USC § 102(e) as being anticipated by Barton (US Patent Publication 2002/0059093).

First of all, Barton is a method and system for identifying and quantizing compliance issues. Barton does require users to begin by filling out questionnaires. But contrary to the Examiner's belief, Barton does not at all teach a method for collaborative group decision making. They describe a system that "allows a user to input data relating to the identification and quantification of a company's compliance process and to receive identification and quantification of compliance output".

Barton also does not specify elements of an automatic participant survey process. It is clear that interviews are conducted with "process owners" for area compliance. The interviewing step includes receiving information via a questionnaire which is then stored in a server. However, there is no notion of directly surveying participants via the automatic survey process as now claimed by Applicant.

Most importantly, Barton does not specify an automatic logic process for facilitating group decisions. The section of Barton cited by the Examiner that supposedly teaches this (namely paragraph 63), describes in more detail Barton's Fig. 5. That is a diagram 110 that lists different action items 112 for an affirmative or negative answer to a particular question 114. It is said, for example, if the user answers "yes" to the question "Is there a mechanism for tracking employee training?", the system then presents actions items 112. If the user answers "negatively", the system presents another action item list (relating to whether there is an action plan to fill the gap, who is the owner, and what is the completion date).

This is merely an optional presentation of action item lists; it is not even suggestive of a system where a group decision is made via an automatic logic model process.

Furthermore, while Barton does describe in paragraphs 65 that server 12 can be used to tabulate and graph results automatically, there is no notion of automatically and continuously re-

analyzing survey response data to provide a compiled graphical view of collaborative group decision, on a real time basis, as the individual responses change. Barton seems only to suggest that a report can be "rerun" by a compliance leader.

Finally, paragraphs 81 and 89 in Barton discuss only how his system is used to identify potential failures. The example given is an identification of a high risk failure mode via analysis metrics. No notion of managing or providing guidance in a group decision making process is evident.

Claims 2-6 depend from claim 1 and are thus patentable through the same reasons.

As to claim 65, Barton does not describe an influence object format that represents both (a) individual survey responses as well as (b) relationships between the individual responses. Paragraphs 66 and 73 of Barton merely suggest that the server can summarize results of the survey. There is no suggestion that individual survey responses are represented as graphical objects, nor is there any "object" that represents both the survey responses and the relationships between the individual responses.

By such objects, Applicants are specifically referring to such structures as shown in Fig. 6 of this application. The "perception map," for example, not only summarizes a state of compiled results (in terms of colors associated with the state of various functional operations (i.e., leadership, strategy, marketing, culture, operations, finance, etc.) but also includes graphical indicia indicating the relationship between the spheres. Similarly, the circuit board map of Fig. 7 of Applicants' disclosure describes a visual structure in which connections are made between these spheres of influence (e.g., the arrow heads having various attributes such as, for example, "thickness"- indicating how many of the underlying influence maps indicate a connection, or a red "hammer" object which indicates disconnections), or other graphical indicia to indicate relationships between various influence areas.

Claims 66 through 71 are allowable for the same reasons.

Other claims were rejected in view of the combination of Barton in view of Cimral (U.S. Patent 6,578,004). Cimral also does not teach any graphical representation of influence objects as spheres. Cimral has to do with facilitating management of investments and generating "score cards" for different types of portfolios. The investment maps shown in Figure 3C of Cimral graphically depicts a subset of IT portfolios in accordance with risk, technology type, etc. The

size and soundness of a portfolio is depicted by the size and color of "bubbles." Cimral, however, does not represent an influence object which themselves are a depiction of <u>a compiled group decision,</u> that involves representing both individual survey responses <u>as well as relationships between spheres.</u>

Claims 73 through 84 depend from claims 65 and thus are likewise allowable for the same reason.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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